

ANS, Just Deal with it! *Scenario*

Lake Allard is a large lake on the outskirts of Fern Washington. The lake is home to a number of native fish (including trophy size rainbow trout), aquatic plant and animal species including beaver and migrating waterfowl. Lake Allard is a popular tourist destination with swimming, recreational boating, fishing and crayfish harvesting. The lake is also the source of drinking water for half the population of Fern due to its pristine water quality. Most year-round residents of Fern live along the shore of the lake, lately they have begun to notice a strange submerged aquatic plant with bright green leaves growing in different areas along the shore that they never noticed before. One of the residents contacted an aquatic plant specialist who identified the plant as hydrilla – an invasive aquatic plant originally from Asia that was first brought to the United States intentionally to sell as an aquarium plant. Hydrilla is best known for its tendency to completely take over a water body. Dense infestations of hydrilla can shade or crowd out all other native aquatic plants, alter water chemistry, increase water temperatures and affect the diversity and abundance of fish populations. Thick mats of vegetation can impede navigation, and reduce recreational boating, fishing and swimming opportunities. Hydrilla was likely introduced to Lake Allard by a careless pet owner who dumped their aquarium into the lake, or by a recreational boater who transported a small fragment of hydrilla on his boat or boat trailer from another contaminated water body. At its current rate of growth, residents are worried Lake Allard will be full of hydrilla by next summer. This could be devastating to a community which relies heavily on the income made from tourism. Members of the community decide to have an emergency meeting to discuss what they should do about the hydrilla infestation before it gets even more out of hand.

What course of action should the community take to eradicate or control the spread of hydrilla in Lake Allard?



Leaves of hydrilla. Photo Credit: Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida, IFAS



Severe hydrilla infestation. Photo Credit: Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida, IFAS